

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 are pending. Claim 44 has been cancelled without prejudice.

I. Response to Restriction Requirement

In response to the requirement for restriction in the Office Action, applicants elect Group I, (claims 1-43), without traverse, for examination on the merits at this time. Claim 44, directed to non-elected Group II, has been cancelled without prejudice and may be submitted for examination in a divisional application.

II. Objection to Abstract

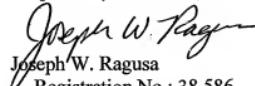
In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the present application contains no abstract. This is not correct. The present application, with is a National stage application under Section 371 based on International application, uses the English publication of the International application as its specification, as is permitted in practice under Section 371. An examination of that specification reveals that the abstract was indeed included, at the beginning of the specification rather than at the end, in accordance with the publication guidelines under the PCT. Moreover, there is no requirement that an abstract on a separate page be filed for such National stage applications.

It is also noted that the Patent and Trademark Office did not object to the application for a lack of an abstract when it was filed. In fact, the U.S. publication of the present application, a copy of the first page of which is attached for reference, shows the abstract. In view of the foregoing, it is believed clear that an abstract was in fact filed with the present application in accordance with the rules, and the objection regarding the abstract should be withdrawn.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, and the arguments relating to claims 1-43 on record, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,


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